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ABSTRACT

The booklet of activities and suggestions for organizing and conducting the 1975 American Week is designed to increase public understanding and appreciation of the schools, to encourage parents to visit their childrens' schools, to secure civic and community support for measures to improve the schools, and to help students gain an appreciation of what the schools are doing for them. Preparations for the week include suggestions for selecting a coordinating chairman and planning committee, establishing a budget, newspaper publicity, radio and television publicity, and other publicity avenues. Observance activities for a school open house, individual teachers, the local education association, special school assemblies, church and civic organizations, the parent-teacher association, and the American Legion are provided. Also included is a case study of a successful American Education Week in Michigan City, Indiana. (Author/DE)

Observance Manual

A Guide to
Organizing
And Planning
For American Education Week
For the
Bicentennial Year.

A National Education Association Publication

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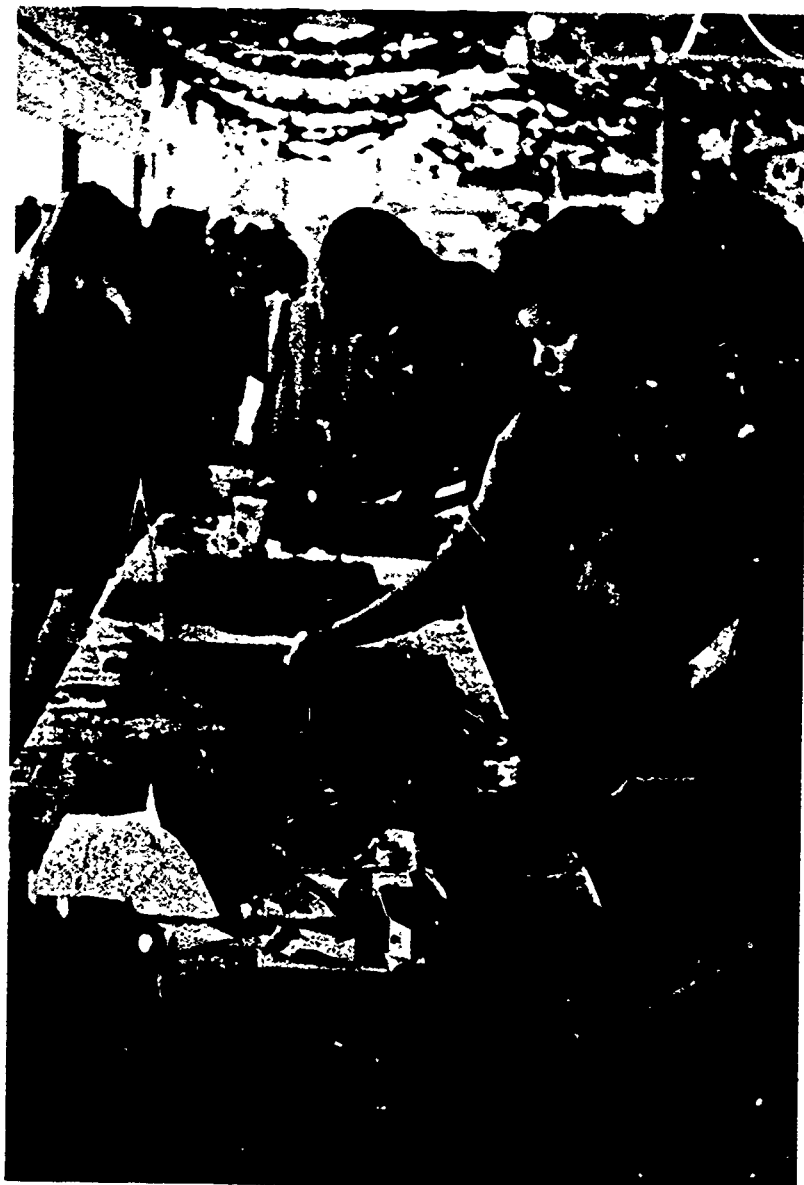


Photo courtesy of The Morning Call

Demonstrations of student work are an excellent way to inform the public about your schools' programs. This art display was one of the thirty tables set up for a weeklong exhibit at the Whitehall (Pa.) Mall by the Whitehall-Coplay Education Association.

INTRODUCTION

American Education Week, according to one teacher, is the "week" that starts each year in September and ends the following August. Indeed, school public relations ought to be a never-ending activity. But for one week out of the year, now the third week in November, an especially vigorous and concentrated effort is made to let the public know what its schools are doing and why—and what they could be doing. After all, what else but the schools is "owned" by every taxpayer and plays such a vital role in the life of every citizen?

Since its beginning in 1921, American Education Week has become the biggest public relations event of the school year. From the standpoint of nationwide participation, it is one of the biggest public relations undertakings in the country. It is estimated that more than 32 million persons visit schools and more than 100 million are reached by media publicity during American Education Week.

This booklet has been prepared by the National Education Association to help you plan a successful observance of American Education Week and to help you relate the event to education in general, to the AEW activities of the national cosponsors, and to the public.

American Education Week was initiated after draft boards discovered during World War I that about 25 percent of the young men called for military service were illiterate and about 29 percent were physically unfit. These alarming conditions led members of the Americanism Commission of the then newly formed American Legion to consult in 1917 with officers of the National Education Association and officials of the U.S. Office of Education about launching an educational campaign to correct such deficiencies.

A series of conferences began on a regular basis in 1919, from which evolved a plan for an annual nationwide observance of American Education Week. At its 1921 convention in Des Moines, Iowa, the NEA Representative Assembly adopted a joint program of work with The American Legion, an important part of which was the first AEW observance, set for December 4-10, 1921.

The report of the joint committee, presented at the NEA convention in Boston a year later, contained the following "low estimate" of the results of the first observance:

The cooperation of 200,000 merchants, 20,000 moving-picture theaters, 9000 Legion Posts, 1500 Chambers of Commerce, 14,500 newspapers, 2000 women's clubs, and 50,000 local fraternal, civic, commercial, and religious organizations.*

The report estimated that the observance "reached directly and indirectly more than 25,000,000 people."

The dates for the 1975 observance are November 16-22.

At first there was no general theme for the AEW observance, though daily topics based on fundamental concepts of educational purposes and objectives served as program emphases. From 1929 through 1968, a general theme with supporting daily subtopics was chosen by representatives of the sponsoring organizations. Cosponsors are The American Legion and the National Education Association, which together founded the event in 1921; the U.S. Office of Education, which became a cosponsor in 1922; and the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, which became a cosponsor in 1938. Beginning in 1969, the cosponsors decided that the format for the observance would be both more adaptable to local issues and more relevant to national educational concerns if the daily topics were abandoned and the general theme interpreted as a whole. A complete list of AEW general themes from 1929 to 1975 is on page 5.

As the themes indicate, the purposes of American Education Week have broadened beyond the eradication of illiteracy and the promotion of physical fitness. Today, the observance serves to increase public understanding and appreciation of the schools, to encourage parents to visit their children's schools at least once a year, to secure civic and community support for measures to improve the schools, and to help students gain an appreciation of what the schools are doing for them.

The National Education Association believes that a year-round public information program is properly a responsibility of all school personnel and that American Education Week is a highlight of that program. To be really successful, an AEW observance must be carefully planned long in advance of the actual event. The following pages present some of the considerations involved in a well-planned AEW observance. No one organization, school system, or college could be

* National Education Association. *Address and Proceedings, 1922*. Washington, D.C.: the Association, 1922. p. 98.

expected to follow all these suggestions, but they should serve as a useful guide to those with the responsibility of planning the observance.

AEW THEMES, 1929-1975

- 1975 "Our Future Is in Our Schools"
- 1974 "Stay Involved"
- 1973 "Get Involved"
- 1972 "Make Education Top Priority"
- 1971 "Help Schools Bridge the Gap"
- 1970 "Shape Schools for the 70's"
- 1969 "Better Education — Your Job"
- 1968 "America Has a Good Thing Going — Its Schools"
- 1967 "How Good Are Your Schools?"
- 1966 "Education Adds Up"
- 1965 "Invest in Learning"
- 1964 "Education Pays Dividends"
- 1963 "Education Strengthens the Nation"
- 1962 "Education Meets the Challenge of Change"
- 1961 "Your Schools: Time for a Progress Report"
- 1960 "Strengthen Schools for the 60's"
- 1959 "Praise and Appraise Your Schools"
- 1958 "Report Card U.S.A."
- 1957 "An Educated People Moves Freedom Forward"
- 1956 "Schools for a Strong America"
- 1955 "Schools—YOUR Investment in America"
- 1954 "Good Schools Are YOUR Responsibility"
- 1953 "Good Schools Are YOUR Responsibility"
- 1952 "Children in Today's World"
- 1951 "Unite for Freedom"
- 1950 "Government Of, By, and For the People"
- 1949 "Making Democracy Work"
- 1948 "Strengthening the Foundations of Freedom"
- 1947 "The Schools Are Yours"
- 1946 "Education for the Atomic Age"
- 1945 "Education To Promote the General Welfare"
- 1944 "Education for New Tasks"
- 1943 "Education for Victory"
- 1942 "Education for Free Men"
- 1941 "Education for a Strong America"
- 1940 "Education for the Common Defense"

- 1939 "Education for the American Way of Life"
- 1938 "Education for Tomorrow's America"
- 1937 "Education and Our National Life"
- 1936 "Our American Schools at Work"
- 1935 "The School and Democracy"
- 1934 "Educating for Tomorrow"
- 1933 "Meeting the Emergency in Education"
- 1932 "The Schools and the Nation's Founders"
- 1931 "What the Schools Are Helping America To Achieve"
- 1930 "The Wise Use of Leisure, the Enrichment of
Human Life, and Adult Education"
- 1929 "Education for Worthy Home Membership"

PREPARING FOR AEW

"The bond issue wasn't approved." "The school budget was defeated." "PTA membership is falling off." "The community is up in arms over the new educational program on. . . ." Glazed stares of disbelief generally accompany such statements by educators and members of the community concerned about their schools.

Why doesn't the community understand what the schools are doing, what they need to do? Why are we smothering in apathy? Such complaints might well become unnecessary in a school district that carefully plans an AEW observance which ignites public interest in its schools for the entire school year. Paying lip service to the event by announcing that everyone is welcome to visit the schools during the week—with no overall plan or preparations for specific activities, no arrangements for airing the educational controversies of the district or school, no demonstrations of innovative programs or facilities—usually produces a meager turnout and no increase in public understanding or support.

A well-planned AEW observance can highlight the school public relations program and start things rolling for activities throughout the school year. Good preparation, which explores every means of convincing the public their participation in the observance is essential and worthwhile, is a major step toward full realization of the potential rewards of an AEW observance.

SELECTING A COORDINATING CHAIRMAN

A dynamic AEW coordinating chairman can mean the difference between an effective, meaningful observance of American Education Week and a frenzied failure.

Ideally the coordinating chairman should be a professional public relations expert, but usually he is a teacher or lay volunteer with little

public relations experience and is very much in need of the kind of assistance this guide attempts to provide.

As in any public relations work, *the AEW coordinating chairman should learn all he can about the event*—its history, objectives, and scope—in order to relate it to the attitudes and facilities of his community.

He should *know his community well*. His success with American Education Week will depend largely on his understanding of what motivates and interests the people of his community and what will win their support.

He must also *have a sense of timing and an ability to draw up an agenda* so that he can plan meaningful and fruitful meetings.

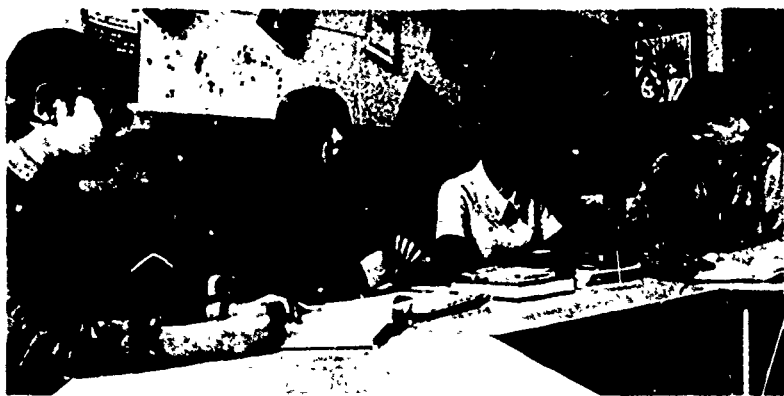
One of the coordinating chairman's most useful tasks will be to *compile a record of his community's observance*. He should urge all groups and individuals participating in the event to supply him with at least one copy of every program, speech, news clipping, newsletter, photograph, menu, or other item prepared for the observance. These will be valuable for planning the next observance.

Periodically he should *send letters to presidents of participating groups*, giving them a progress report and offering suggestions concerning their role in the event. A valuable guide to the chairman, to which he can also refer his committee and sponsoring groups, is the *AEW Source Book for Speakers and Writers*, prepared by the National Education Association to illustrate and interpret the annual AEW theme.

SELECTING AN OVERALL PLANNING COMMITTEE

The coordinating chairman begins his duties by organizing an overall planning committee. Members should come from as many interested and related groups as possible: the local school system, a nearby university or college, the local professional education association, private schools in the area, the PTA, The American Legion and Auxiliaries, business, labor, and industry, and civic organizations such as the Kiwanis, Rotary, and Lions Clubs.

Once the overall committee is established and oriented to the scope and purposes of the local observance, it should be divided into subcommittees, each with its own chairman who will have clearly defined responsibilities and sufficient authority to see them through.



Some suggestions for the kinds of subcommittees needed include:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| 1. Budget and Finance | 6. Newspapers and Local House
Organs |
| 2. Church and Civic
Programs | 7. Signs, Posters, and Displays |
| 3. Speakers Bureau | 8. Department Stores and
Shopping Centers |
| 4. Radio and Television | 9. Special Activities. |
| 5. School Open House | |

After the overall committee has determined a general working plan for preparation and execution of American Education Week, the coordinating chairman should develop a written master plan to serve as both a schedule and a prospectus. It will include a detailed description of things to be done; it will stress to committee members and other volunteers that their assignments have to meet every deadline; and it will become an automatic record of the event, which should prove useful to those who plan subsequent AEW observances.

The overall schedule can be handled in a number of ways, but *one particularly effective method is to make it up to resemble an oversized calendar, with ample room for notes in each dated square.* Such a calendar can easily be checked for deadlines by everyone concerned. The committee should also devise a checklist similar to the one below.

AEW PLANNING CHECKLIST

This checklist is designed to help with the planning of a comprehensive community observance of American Education Week. Specific ideas for each of the activities listed below can be found in this booklet. Descriptions of AEW materials available from the National Education Association are found in the special combination *Planning Guide and Order Form*.

Open House
Special Assembly Programs
Special PTA Meetings
Education-Centered Programs
of Clubs and Organizations
Display of AEW Posters
AEW Proclamation by Mayor
Newspaper Ads
Special AEW School Publications
Special Newspaper Articles

Parades or Patriotic Programs
Special TV and Radio Programs
Special Church Services and Bulletins
Exhibits of Student Work
AEW Promotion Through Libraries
Distribution of Information Leaflets
Recognition of Outstanding Achievements
Use of Mailing Inserts
Testimonial Luncheons and Dinners

ESTABLISHING A BUDGET

A successful AEW campaign will involve some financial outlay, though generally it will not be very much. It is wise, however, to prepare a budget from the outset of your planning.

There are two general ways of establishing a budget. The committee may be told by the sponsoring group or groups that it has a fixed number of dollars to work with, or the sponsors may examine various activities under consideration, make an individual determination of the projected costs for each one, and arrange for the provision of funds in that way.

Sponsoring groups will almost always make a small contribution to a working fund for the AEW committee, and their pooled contributions generally cover all observance expenses. Some organizations—local school boards, professional education associations, PTA's, and The American Legion, for example—provide for American Education Week in their annual budgets and supplement these appropriations with donations from businessmen and other community groups interested in the event. Not infrequently, superintendents and principals have a general fund from which they may finance special AEW activities in a neighborhood school or on a systemwide basis.

Much of the material to help promote American Education Week can be obtained or produced locally. Student work can be extremely useful in demonstrating the local education program. The National Education Association and many of its affiliates at state and local levels develop a wide variety of materials each year which are made available at nominal cost. It is a good idea for the subcommittee chairmen to study these materials to decide which ones would best fit the needs and budget of their local observance.

OBSERVANCE ACTIVITIES

Selecting activities for the AEW observance requires careful thought. American Education Week should include something for everyone—student, parent, teacher, community group, civic official school system or college, and the general public. To accomplish this in a week's time requires maximum planning to ensure the best use of time as well as the total involvement of local citizens.

There are, of course, key groups—school or college staff members, the local professional education association, the school board, and the students themselves—which provide natural leadership for AEW activities. Civic and service organizations play vital roles in AEW observances in many parts of the country, but by and large the event is given its impetus by those directly involved in the day-to-day operation of the schools.

One elementary school in Evansville, Wisc., attempted to make its observance appeal directly to the various segments of the community by focusing its activities on a different group each day. Monday was Stag Day, when all area business and professional men were invited to the school. Tuesday was set aside for businesswomen, women's clubs, and senior citizens; the school arranged transportation for the senior citizens to facilitate their attendance. Wednesday was Harvest Day, with local farmers invited. Thursday night was an open house for parents, and Friday was Children's Day, during which pupils in grades 4 through 6 taught their own classes, and pupils in kindergarten through grade 3 exchanged activities and gave demonstrations of their work in each other's classes.

The first step in selecting AEW activities is to decide how the educational program in your district relates to the general AEW theme. The 1975 theme is "Our Future Is in Our Schools." How can you demonstrate this to your community? The *AEW Source Book* may give you some ideas on how the theme relates to your local situation.

The "Fourth Annual Gallup Poll of Public Attitudes Toward Education" indicates that American adults are most concerned with discipline, school financing, integration/segregation, and poor teaching. Whatever the issues may be in your district, a program based on a topic of importance and interest might be the impetus that brings parents back for future programs once they realize that the schools are willing to discuss issues that concern them. Because the dress code was an issue in Miami, Fla., one junior high school presented a fashion show during American Education Week, exhibiting the kinds of clothing permissible under its new code.

A second major source of ideas for AEW activities is the elections that may closely follow American Education Week. If your community is having a school board election, it is a natural topic for a program. The Wyoming Education Association sponsored an activity carried on by each local association in the state. During American Education Week, meetings among teachers, administrators, school board members, and legislative candidates were arranged in each district to appraise the needs of the schools. Citizens were urged to support candidates who conscientiously work to improve schools. This can work locally too.

Certainly every school or school system will want to put its best foot forward during American Education Week. But it won't get anywhere unless the other foot follows right along in stride. There is no reason for schools to hide their problems from the community. It is unrealistic to believe that the problems will be solved without the community's support — both moral and financial. One Morgantown, W. Va., elementary school highlighted its publicity of American Education Week with photographs of the school library, which was at the time set up in a hallway. The hope was to convince the community to approve a bond issue that would provide funds to add a real library facility to the school. American Education Week is the ideal time to make the community aware of the gap between what is and what could be in its educational programs.

SCHOOL OPEN HOUSE

The school itself is logically the focal point for most phases of the AEW observance. It follows that the most popular observance activity is the direct contact between parents and educators afforded by the school open house.

From the school's point of view, the open house is the most direct and effective medium of communication between school and commu-



AEW observances in the Worcester, Mass., Public Schools are aimed at showing parents the schools are interested in them and what their children are learning. Above, a South High School art instructor explains a pupil's work to an attentive parent. Below, a cheerleader at Providence Street Junior High School hands an AEW program to visiting parents.

Photos courtesy of Charles S. Kolak, Worcester Public Schools



nity. Citizens who visit their schools and colleges usually develop a much better understanding of what is being taught and how than do those who obtain their information secondhand. Although face-to-face contact is most productive on an individual basis, the traditional AEW open house makes it possible to acquaint many more citizens with their community's schools and teachers than would otherwise be possible in one week.

Initial Planning. While many schools maintain an open-door policy year-round, inviting parents to visit their children's classes at their own convenience, American Education Week is a time of planned and organized open house activity. The school or college that knows company is coming prepares to tell its story in the most effective manner.

The NEA booklet *Open House in Your School* is the most comprehensive guide available for planning and conducting an effective school open house. It provides details for implementing the suggestions that follow and is a valuable tool for an open house committee anxious to have successful school visitation without disrupting the instructional program. *Open House in Your School* can be ordered from the National Education Association Order Department for \$1.68 (Stock No. 1323-9-00).

Organization for an open house is as important as organization for the overall AEW program. Planning should involve concerned teachers, administrators, parents, and students. Responsibility for the open house should be given to someone who has the authority and drive to put plans into action and to follow through.

The primary objective of the AEW open house will generally be to give visitors an understanding of, and appreciation for, the educational program and its personnel—understanding and appreciation they can take home with them and pass along to others. If there is a new school building, a new facility, or renovation in an existing building, American Education Week is an ideal time to hold dedication ceremonies. The public is usually interested in seeing and learning about something new. The open house should be designed not simply to entertain visitors but to educate them about what the educational institutions are doing for their children and why and how they are doing it.

The first job of the open house chairman and his committee is, to decide what kind of program will be presented. For example, parents may be invited to walk through an abbreviated version of their

child's school day, spending 10 minutes or so on each subject their child is studying; the teacher can explain what he is teaching and how. Such a program is particularly suitable for the junior and senior high schools, where the school day is already divided into neat segments, but an adaptation of it on the elementary school level can be worked out without difficulty.

Some secondary schools hold half a day of school on the day of the open house, and then have the students return in the evening with their parents to complete the school day. While the parents see only some of their child's courses, this plan allows them to see the actual process of teaching and learning.

Certainly if there are new courses or programs at the school, these should be highlights of an open house. Visitors should be able to see either the new method in operation or products of students' work in a new course. A third-grade class in Scottsdale, Ariz., used an interesting method to present course work. They taped their science reports, and the school set up listening centers so parents could hear the tapes during the open house.

The open house committee is responsible for carefully planning the event and publicizing it well. Such questions as whether to have special programs, to select and train guides, to serve light refreshments, and to place interpretive signs on exhibits deserve considerable detailed attention well in advance of the event.

A certain amount of systemwide planning is also advisable, to enable schools to stagger the dates and times of their open houses, so that parents with children in more than one school can attend all the open houses. The Worcester, Mass., schools extend American Education Week over three weeks, scheduling open houses in elementary schools the first week, in junior high schools the second, and in senior high schools the third.

Some school districts find that the older the students are, the less enthusiastic they are about urging parents and community members to visit their school. Chicago Heights, Ill., solved the problem imaginatively. High school students were told they would be excused for as much of the open house day as they provided adults to take their places. Teachers conducted regular classes, and the adult students had to take assignments, hand in homework, and do whatever else was required of the regular students.

Whatever plans are made for the open house, the committee should make certain that every teacher receives a copy of the schedule for the entire event well in advance of the visitation. This is not only

a courtesy to the teachers involved but also an excellent way to help ensure a successful observance, for the classroom is the nucleus of open house activity.

Publicity. While an AEW open house is nothing new, it is almost always newsworthy, so representatives of local newspapers and radio and television stations should be among the school's most interested guests. An open house frequently provides an opportunity for the school or college to make valuable contacts with representatives of the mass media as well as an opportunity for considerable immediate publicity.

Advance publicity is even more important, for many parents may have the idea that if you've seen one open house, you've seen them all. The media can help whet the public's appetite for the particular fare the school will be offering at this year's open house. In Indiana, the *Vincennes Sun-Commercial* ran a two-page spread that not only invited the public to the schools but showed photographs of innovative programs the parents would be able to see in action.

Because the schools belong to the public, your AEW open house guest list should include the entire community. However, parents certainly ought to be top priority guests, and you should also consider issuing special invitations to particular groups in the community. Among the AEW printed materials available from the NEA is a ready-made, illustrated invitation form on which each child can write a personal note of invitation to his parents. Similar forms can be locally designed and produced. Other groups to which you might want to address special invitations include the clergy, civic leaders, retired teachers, business and labor leaders, club officers, and fraternal groups.

You might want to make a special effort to bring to the schools persons who would otherwise be unlikely to come. For example, elementary pupils in Colorado Springs, Colo., sent special invitations to businessmen and residents without school-age children to visit their school. The Rice Square School in Worcester, Mass., held a "Grandparents' Day," on which the pupils' grandparents, many of whom had once attended the school, could see the considerable renovation that had been done on the facility. Each teacher in a school should be given the opportunity to suggest special groups and individuals to whom open house invitations should be extended.

Invitations to the open house can be delivered in a number of ways: for instance, students themselves can prepare them, or spot announcements can be made over the local radio station. These are sometimes prerecorded by school officials or student leaders, and then



used during broadcasts of football games or at prime-time intermissions.

The most effective invitations will indicate some of the events planned for the open house, making them appear worthwhile and interesting for the community. Sixth graders in Manatee County, Fla.,

participated in a poster and essay contest with American Education Week as the subject. Invitations to the school open house indicated that the winners of the contest would be announced at that time—a sure draw, at least for the parents of the participants.

To make sure that everyone who might be interested in attending the AEW open house knows about it, communitywide general invitations should be extended through the mass media and by means of some of the special materials developed each year by the National Education Association to help increase open house attendance.

Random Considerations. Guests should be invited to register when they enter the building so that a record of attendance can be obtained. There should be enough guest books and helpers to ensure that the registration desk does not become a bottleneck. An AEW open house visitor should receive a cordial, informal welcome rather than a formalized, "Please sign your name and take a seat in the auditorium."

Make sure that the buildings and grounds are clean and attractive, without giving them an overtended look. A guest can usually spot the difference between a well-ordered school plant and one that has been set in shape specifically to make a good impression. This holds true for classrooms, corridors, and community rooms such as the auditorium and lunchroom. Remember that the open house preparation should not cover up real problem areas. If maintenance or facilities are not what they should be, visitors should be aware of it so they can help stimulate corrective action.

It would be a good idea to assign well-informed students to telephone duty on the day and evening of the open house to answer inquiries concerning the open house schedule, the program, and related matters such as parking facilities.

Parking can be a problem if the open house attracts a large attendance. Consideration should be given to where guests may park, and specific information should be included in the invitations. Parking lot signs and parking helpers indicate thoughtful courtesy that will be appreciated.

Directional signs inside and outside the building can be a big help, too, even though the open house committee may have arranged for hosts, hostesses, and guides.

One AEW open house service that might be offered to help increase attendance is a nursery with a qualified person in charge. In Swampscott, Mass., PTA mothers baby-sit with preschool children during daytime open house events and parent-teacher conferences. Nursery facilities will enable many parents to come to open house pro-

grams who might otherwise be unable to attend. Also, parents will be better able to concentrate on the program if they know their children are happy and in good hands.

A checklist for conducting a successful AEW open house can be as long or as short as the staff has the time, patience, and energy to make it. Some items that ought to be considered are suitable assembly areas for starting tours, a place for serving refreshments, music, hall displays of student work or of financial matters, badges or ribbons for hosts and hostesses, and lapel tags for visitors.

Special printed materials might be distributed, such as an AEW edition of the school newspaper or a mimeographed fact sheet on the history of the school, including costs of the plant and of special equipment. Identification cards or badges and maps of the building layout should be made available; special information kits for representatives of the mass media could be made up.

Explanations should be simple but complete, and questions from visitors should be encouraged; how the schools look out for pupils' health and safety as well as for their education should be explained; modern equipment can be demonstrated, pointing out costs and advantages; ample refreshments should be available in an attractive setting; paper plates and cups should be used; and large waste containers and ash trays should be conveniently placed.

Follow-Up. When the crowd files out, happy at seeing the many important educational activities, you'll have just begun. For an effective public relations program, every day should be open house. While it may be some time before your next formal program, parents and other citizens must be made to realize that they are welcome at any time. And the AEW open house can be a good first step in a series of individual or group conferences, study groups, panel discussions, and advisory committee activities.

Remember to keep records of open house planning and activities. These can be used the following year in planning an even better program of AEW activities.

THE INDIVIDUAL TEACHER

No matter how widespread or impressive the observance, the final success of American Education Week is its impact in the classroom, and no one has greater control over this impact than the individual teacher. Thorough, inclusive, but considerate planning can enlist his cooperation without his feeling that you have thrust an extra burden upon him.

One of the most effective ways to approach the teacher is to encourage him to tie his regular lessons and classroom projects to the event. English teachers are generally willing to assign compositions related to the AEW theme, and the art department can be prevailed upon to design sets for special programs and to supervise the setting up of school displays.

Speech and drama classes like to help with special assemblies and can work closely with commercial and audiovisual classes and clubs in the preparation of materials for all-school programs. They may wish to produce a play about the importance of education; the play may be conceived locally or with the help of manuscripts listed in the *AEW Planning Guide*.

Math teachers have contributed to the observance by helping their students develop statements on the local tax rate and analyses of school expenditures, enrollment trends, and other aspects of educational finance. Social studies teachers have sent out student lecturers to discuss the history of education, and teachers of foreign languages have produced interesting programs illustrating how foreign cultures have become involved with the American scene.

Social studies and science classes can produce effective exhibits of their course work for school corridors or downtown store windows and shopping malls. Live demonstrations of physical education activities have always proved popular, and band and chorus performances make ideal entertainment for AEW events.

Students can also act as hosts, baby-sitters, parking attendants, and builders of exhibits and demonstrations for school visitors.

It can easily be seen that, given enough time and information, a classroom teacher can make invaluable contributions to school open houses and community programs and can win the support of students, a potent force for implementing AEW ideas.

THE LOCAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

Whether the local professional education association plays a coordinating role or a supporting role, it is a logical agency to assume much of the responsibility, including financial support, for the AEW program. Besides assisting other community groups with joint projects, the local association can focus some attention upon itself and use

American Education Week as a time to reassess its own contributions to the local education program. It can offer recognition to community residents who have aided the local school or college; it can pay tribute to school board members and to its own outstanding members, including retiring educators.

One example of active involvement in an AEW observance by a local education association was that of the Fayette County (Ky.)



Education Association. Under the leadership of the public relations chairman and her committee, the association prepared press releases, three 30-minute local television programs dealing with the schools, and spot announcements about American Education Week for radio and TV. It also produced an exhibit of student work for a shopping mall, where pamphlets on education were distributed to interested citizens. To increase the base of support for the AEW observance, the association coordinated a full-page newspaper advertisement sponsored by area businesses, announcing American Education Week and listing events in each school.

Local associations carry on a variety of activities during American Education Week. Besides maintaining an educational exhibit at a shopping mall where information about the schools was dispensed through leaflets and over a public address system, the Danville (Ill.) Education Association created a display of student art for the county museum and prepared spot announcements for radio and TV. Association personnel manned a special telephone service, "Education Line," at the association office, through which citizens could obtain further information about local education. The Cedar Rapids (Iowa) Education Association provided a speakers bureau for organizations presenting programs on education during American Education Week. Educators versed in specific current issues made themselves available as speakers through the association office. In Albuquerque, N. Mex., the classroom teachers association did research and reported on the economic impact of the Albuquerque public schools on the community. The local press found the report newsworthy copy for American Education Week.

The association's October meeting can feature the theme of American Education Week through speeches, panel discussions, or audio-visual programs open to the public which would identify local achievements and current issues in public education. The local association may want to use American Education Week as an opportunity to discuss major issues facing education today, e.g., the SCHOLLS FOR THE 70's program which is covered by a series of publications produced by the National Education Association. In addition, a series of "discussion-starter" tapes have been designed to supplement these volumes. Their intent is to spark an intensive, nationwide dialogue-and-action program on the critical questions of education.

American Education Week is also a good time for the local association to announce a new scholarship which it is offering to worthy students or teachers, or to award an already existing one.



The Warren County (Va.) Education Association increased student and community interest by sponsoring an AEW essay contest for students on the theme, "My Idea of a Perfect School," with small cash prizes for the winners. Local newspapers gave added publicity to American Education Week by reporting the contest results.

Local Student NEA and FTA chapters can also lend support to the AEW observance. In some schools, FTA members serve as open house guides. In Frederick, Md., the FTA chapter planned the school's open house. Other chapters have successfully presented special events, such as assembly programs, during the observance.

And, of course, the association newsletter or magazine offers an excellent way to disseminate AEW information. Many associations prepare a special AEW issue for distribution to the general public.

SPECIAL SCHOOL ASSEMBLIES

School assembly programs are excellent opportunities for students to show their creative thinking and talent. Programs should be

planned early and kept relatively simple; definite aims should be determined in accordance with talent available. Properly motivated, students enjoy telling what their school or college is doing and why it's important—and they enthusiastically localize their thoughts to make them understood by their peers. In short, students are excellent public relations sources and should be given opportunity to fill that function.

Some common types of assembly programs are speeches by students, panel discussions (involving students and adults), plays, choral programs, awards to parents for their interest in the school (presented by student leaders), appropriate films or filmstrips, intraschool quiz programs, and guest speakers. Remember that during American Education Week many elected and appointed local government officials and community leaders may be willing and even eager to publicize their views on education at a school program, especially one that is open to the voting public.

Try to capitalize on what is of current interest about education, either locally or nationally. In Rock Island, Ill., a study and evaluation of the schools made the previous year was officially reported during American Education Week. The chairman of the evaluation committee gave an oral report at a school program, and copies were distributed to all school and public libraries for interested citizens to read.

Dynamic programs can and should encourage follow-up activity by the adult audiences. They can be repeated before PTA, church, or civic organizations and are often newsworthy enough to attract the attention of the press.

CHURCH AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION.

In many places American Education Week begins in the church. Services that week are often education-centered, tied to the theme through the sermon, readings, and music. Church newsletters carry announcements about American Education Week and give information about the local school program, while related display materials are featured in the foyer, library, and Sunday school classrooms.

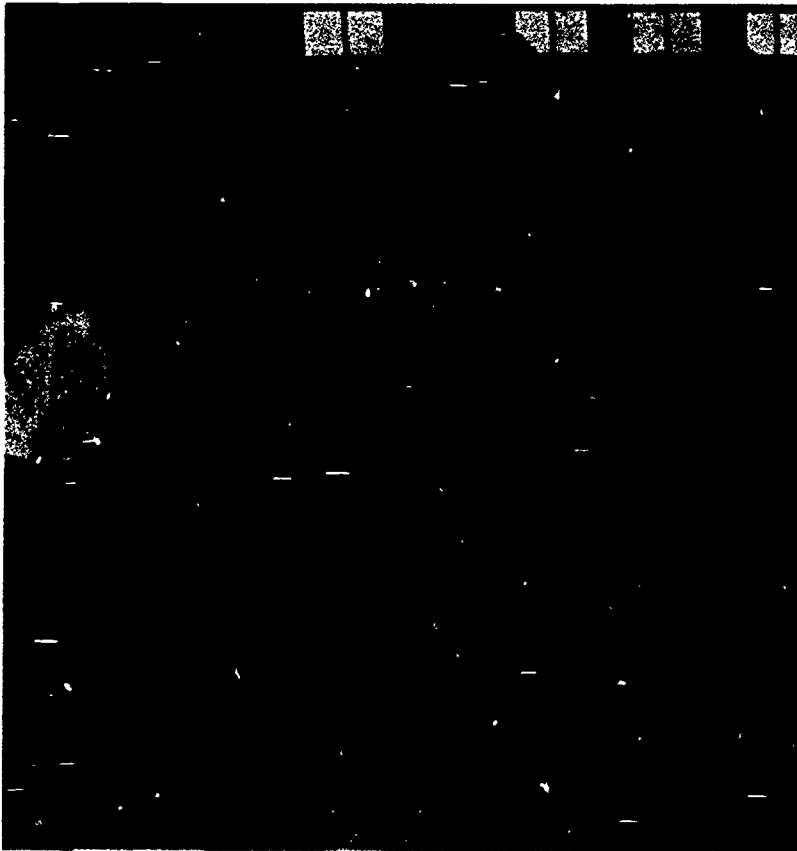
American Education Week is often officially launched by the mayor, who issues a proclamation declaring it a formal event on the town's agenda. The results can be a variety of civic AEW activities: receptions for school staff members, displays in shop windows, and special programs on education and local educational problems. Vet-

erans Day parades sometimes include a float or two directly related to the AEW theme.

Many local associations, businesses, and school systems use postage meters announcing American Education Week on letters canceled through their machines, and some towns provide centrally located billboard space where a special committee puts up daily AEW announcements.

THE PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATION

As the local unit of one of the four national AEW cosponsors, the parent-teacher association should be directly involved in the general planning for the observance and expect to provide some financial support.



Several major projects can be turned over exclusively to PTA subcommittees or units. PTA members can help to plan, publicize, conduct, and evaluate open house programs. They can influence the success of demonstration lessons, study and discussion groups, exhibits, and other projects. PTA workers are often in the best position to contact the lay citizens you want to participate in American Education Week. Both mothers and fathers can make personal contacts.

The October PTA meeting can be one of the major events in the overall AEW observance. Generally the first meeting of the year, it is also the meeting likely to attract the largest attendance. Thus, it can help generate interest in AEW activities, while the fact that American Education Week is bringing parents to the school can be used to boost PTA membership by illustrating the PTA's involvement in and importance to local school programs. This meeting might focus on the AEW theme or provide guidance for parents in helping their children succeed in school. The NEA has produced a series of multimedia kits entitled *Briefing for Parents* which could be used very effectively for this purpose. Some of the more recent titles are "How You Can Help Your Child Get the Most Out of School," a set on "How To Listen to Your Child" and "How To Get Your Child To Listen to You," "Your Child and the Law," and one just produced, "Your Child and School Success." Also available from NEA are various materials on parent involvement—bringing parents into the classroom to participate in the educational experiences of their children and to assist the teacher. Included in the Parent Involvement Series are the filmstrip *Parents and Teachers Together (for the Benefit of Children)* and the informational leaflet "Get Involved in Your Child's School," as well as other items to help teachers implement a local parent involvement program. Encouraging parents to get involved in their children's schools is an excellent way to further the cause of education.

In North Adams, Mass., the PTA arranged an AEW program in which the School Committee, the superintendent, and the principals discussed new projects the schools were undertaking. In Lewisburg, Pa., the PTA's held a reception at the junior high school for all new school personnel in the district, and the elementary school PTA's held a joint meeting on "The Future of Reading in the Lewisburg District." Some PTA's arrange the assembly program during the open house; others concentrate on one aspect of the open house in an effort to draw a large attendance. In Appleton, Wisc., for example, a PTA provided a potluck supper to start the evening open house.

Here are several ways in which the PTA can support American Education Week:

1. By featuring a special AEW program at the October PTA meeting
2. By using PTA bulletins and newsletters, perhaps special editions, to promote interest in American Education Week
3. By sponsoring community forums or mass meetings
4. By presenting awards or scholarships to outstanding students, teachers, lay leaders, or schools
5. By distributing AEW lapel tags and other promotional materials
6. By using bumper strips on PTA members' cars
7. By presenting special PTA broadcasts or telecasts
8. By having PTA members write a series of "Letters to the Editor" to emphasize educational achievements and stimulate reader interest
9. By conducting a publicity campaign about the recent outstanding accomplishments of local PTA units.

THE AMERICAN LEGION

Another strong ally is the local affiliate of another national co-sponsoring group—The American Legion. Legion posts, or their local council, will want to participate in the general planning and can be called on for financial assistance. If there are several posts in your community, don't overlook any of them. Each post usually serves a different area within the community.

Many posts schedule their own programs around education in observance of American Education Week. In Meyersdale, Pa., for example, a Legion Auxiliary invited a guest speaker—the supervising principal of the school district—to discuss the need for a new school and for the renovations of existing buildings.

Here are some of the specific activities often carried out during American Education Week by Legion posts:

1. Participation in school assemblies—talks to the student body, presentations of the colors, special patriotic programs
2. Sponsorship of approved contests, usually relating to some phase of citizenship
3. Sponsorship of athletic contests or physical education dem-

onstrations—because of the Legion's emphasis on citizenship and health education in its own program

4. Presentation of an American flag to one or more schools in formal ceremonies
5. Service as special hosts at AEW meetings
6. Sponsorship of scholarships and distribution of scholarship information (a national program of The American Legion); awards to winners of locally sponsored scholarships.

PUBLICITY

No matter how well-planned your AEW observance, your efforts will be successful only when joined with a forceful publicity campaign. In order to participate in the AEW activities you've planned, the public must know about them and feel they are worth the time and energy required.

NEWSPAPER

Although there are many ways of getting AEW information before the general public—many tools of mass communication—the newspaper is generally considered one of the most valuable media for publicity.

Although the school system and local education associations have well-defined and well-established channels through which they supply the newspapers with a continuous flow of education news, it is a good idea to establish a special relationship with regard to AEW publicity.

Many AEW committees have found it particularly effective to get together with the editor of the local newspaper before AEW plans have been completely formulated. Some ask the editor to assign one staff member to process all AEW releases and to work closely with the committee throughout the campaign.

In general, most communities can count on newspaper cooperation in promoting the observance of American Education Week. But remember, newspapers are interested in *news*. So if the AEW publicity chairman and his co-workers want their releases to wind up in the newspaper instead of the wastebasket, they should see to it that these releases contain *news*. They should contain reports of what speakers and officials *said* and *did*, not merely that they appeared or were present. They should contain enough specific content that readers can relate the activities discussed to their personal affairs or to their relationship with the community.

Every editor's interpretation of what makes news is different, but all include reference to the element of interest. Unanimously they say that to be news, the item must interest the reader.

The typical editor will be concerned about publishing news of interest to the people who subscribe to *his* newspaper. The more colorful, the more interesting, the more exciting the news is, the better play he will give it.

Many newspapers throughout the country report the major items in the sample news releases contained in the AEW kit, especially when an effort is made to adapt ideas in the releases to the local situation.

American Education Week will get a big boost if every day the news of your programs and projects is on each doorstep, waiting to be read. Your local newspaper can be one of your strongest allies in helping to "get out the crowd" to special AEW programs.

Newspapers appreciate plenty of advance notice about American Education Week, and since you know it is going to roll around on schedule, there's no reason (except lack of forethought) why you can't provide that advance notice.

If the editor knows you are doing all you can to help in his difficult task of covering the entire community, his response to AEW news releases is most likely to be a friendly one. After all, his readers and advertisers are your students' parents. Your editor realizes the value of a *good* school story.

While the backbone of any press campaign is the up-to-the-minute news story, you should not neglect the many other types of potential AEW newspaper coverage. Here are a few possibilities.

Official Proclamations, Announcements, Invitations, and Schedules. Make sure information is accurate, complete, and submitted early.

Interpretive Feature Articles on Education Problems or on Specific Aspects of the School Program. Avoid jargon and examine the facts honestly. Choose timely topics, and don't be afraid to examine controversies in depth. These are the stories most likely to be read. An interpretive series, run daily, might cover some of the major concerns in education today, such as the college drive, integration, the drop-out problem, application of technology to education, curriculum changes, increasing urbanization, increased leisure time, school finance (especially through federal programs), and the teacher revolution.

In New Britain, Conn., the school administrators prepared a series of articles, to appear in the newspaper during American Education Week, in which they forecasted innovations and cited needs of the schools. At the same time, the *Williamson News* ran a series of

articles, based on information provided by the school system, about facts and programs of the Mingo County (W. Va.) schools.

Editorials About American Education Week or Your Schools. Supply the editor with ample information without pressuring him. Editors do not appreciate outsiders' spelling out their editorials step by step. But they will welcome a complete AEW kit, a file of recent school publications, and any other helpful information that will enable them to understand the school system better. The more courteous and efficient you are in submitting source material, the more likely you are to see American Education Week begin with a dignified editorial. You might want to suggest the possibility of one or more guest editorials by the school superintendent, the Legion post commander, the president of the local education association, and other important local citizens. For example, the president of the classroom teachers association in Spartanburg, S.C., wrote a guest editorial for the *Herald*, outlining the problems of the schools and the teachers.

Advertisements. Paid advertisements can help your AEW program. While schools or colleges usually will not have funds for commercial advertising, AEW committees often enlist the assistance of public-spirited businessmen. Many committees have had excellent results from full-page ads sponsored jointly by a number of firms. This not only provides a large display of AEW publicity at low cost to each firm but also avoids any semblance of endorsement of one commercial product by the school system. You can add life to these display ads with AEW mats, available from the NEA, or with local photography and art work. All advertising should be planned well in advance, and final arrangements should be made by early autumn.

Pictures. These are the eye-catchers in your newspaper campaign. A steady series of good pictures, illustrating many facets of the school program, will arouse favorable attention. If your local newspaper uses a staff photographer, give him a full list of pictorial suggestions and plenty of help in rounding up the local people at the exact time specified. If your local newspaper uses photographs submitted by outsiders, you can prepare a series taken by a commercial photographer, a school newspaper or yearbook cameraman, or a well-qualified amateur on your faculty.

A strong word of warning here: Learn the newspaper's photographic requirements. Well-meaning but inexperienced beginners can harm school-press relationships by flooding an editor with snapshots of dozens of faces. It's natural for a teacher to want all thirty pupils in a picture, but one child in action makes a far better photograph. Find

Cooperation between the Whitehall-Coplay (Pa.) Education Association and the local media led to favorable publicity for observance activities. The success of the 8-phase exhibit presented by students from all grade levels, including this pottery-making demonstration, indicates the importance of careful advance planning for activities and publicity.

Photo courtesy of The Morning Call



out what the newspaper prefers—8" x 10" prints or prints of some other size. Enlargements must be free from printing defects, well composed, and *sharp*.

Letters to the Editor. Your committee can work with a group of articulate, respected citizens in planning a series of letters on topics of current interest. Often the "Letters to the Editor" section is full of complaints. Here's a good opportunity to balance the scales with some positive statements. Often one well-written letter will stimulate many others, so don't be surprised if you also see letters from strangers.

Human Interest Features. The editor and his readers delight in a never-ending diet of features which humanize individuals around them. Often the news content of a feature is slim, but as long as there is the unexpected, humorous, dramatic, or sentimental, the public's attention will be captured. Schools, because of the children and because of the unique nature of the give-and-take between teacher and student, are among the best sources of human interest stories. Remember—fact, not fiction.

In York and Lancaster, Pa., teachers gave students an assignment to write their thoughts about school prior to American Education Week. The newspapers printed excerpts from these compositions during American Education Week, and some carried pictures of the students. In Ruskin, Fla., an essay contest on "What Education Means to Me" resulted in nationwide coverage via the press services when the winner turned out to be a 12-year-old Mexican migrant worker who had previously dropped out of school and who now saw education as the answer to improving his family's living conditions.

An early contact with the feature editor for a series of articles for the week makes possible advance planning for coverage by the newspapers and will give continuity to your publicity program. In Columbus, Miss., high school teachers wrote a series of articles for a newspaper, expanding on the general AEW theme. Such articles could be easily developed from the *AEW Source Book*, where the week's theme is discussed in detail.

Interpretive Articles on AEW Activities of the Various Cosponsoring Groups. These can add depth to your campaign. Be sure that all groups are pulling together and that their news stories do not overlap.

Special Page on Education. Some newspapers prefer to run a full page of school or college news once each week. Perhaps, with special advance planning and plenty of work by committee members, you can prepare several pages during American Education Week. Even the newspapers that do not usually use a special school page may agree

to such a venture at this time if you can provide them with sufficient material. In larger communities, the newspaper may be willing to publish a special section, which can have strong impact on the community but, of course, will require plenty of work.

Neighborhood and Specialized Newspapers. Many communities, in addition to the daily newspapers, support several weekly, bimonthly, or monthly news publications. While these publications are directed to specific audiences, they nevertheless appeal to large segments of the community and can provide a real boost to any well-planned publicity program. Investigate deadline dates, which may be as much as a month or more in advance of the AEW observance. Query the editors about possibilities, and meet their copy, photographic, or mat requirements.

School and College Newspapers. Don't forget these often unsung junior partners in the publicity field. Students often take home their school newspapers, and surprising numbers of parents read them. If you supply the student editors with background information, you'll get many excellent stories.

Fillers. Did you ever try writing several pages of fillers about your school system, American Education Week, or education in general? Newspapers gobble up fillers endlessly, and you'd be surprised how many people read them.

A Few Final Tips. Before dashing down to the paper with your first story, take stock of a few *do's* and *don't's*.

Do—

1. Indicate the source of the story. At the top of the first page put the name of the school or college and the name, address, and telephone number of the writer.
2. Give a release date or mark it "for immediate release." Watch your timing. Saturday is often a poor day for a story because papers are small and less space is available. Submit your longest stories for publication on days when the newspapers are thickest in your community. Even then, work for brevity.
3. Prepare clean copy. This means a typewritten manuscript, double-spaced, on one side of the page only, and well proof-read, with the top third of the front page blank so the copy desk can pencil in a headline. If in doubt about neatness, type it over. There's no quicker way to an editor's heart than 100 percent clean copy.
4. Tell who, what, when, where, why, and how.
5. Be brief.

6. Include full names, double-checked for spelling. If you don't have the first name, you must include two initials.
7. Adhere to the newspaper's deadlines.
8. If there are two papers in your town, play fair to both by giving each an equal share of the stories.

But—

1. Don't write headlines; the newspaper *always* writes them.
2. Don't send carbons; each paper wants an "exclusive."
3. Don't expect your story to run word for word as you submit it. Each newspaper has its own editorial style and may alter your story even if it is well written.
4. Don't be angry if your story is cut; it is competing for space with news from all over the world. Newspapers generally cut from the bottom up, so be sure to put your most important news first.
5. Don't be angry at trivial inaccuracies. Human errors creep in occasionally, especially under pressure of deadlines.
6. Don't ask for a story to appear on a specific page. This is the editor's business, not yours, and such requests are inevitably resented.
7. Don't beg for space. Instead, submit stories that can be accepted on their merit.

RADIO AND TELEVISION

Radio and television offer outstanding opportunities to promote public interest in American Education Week and to publicize observance activities and school achievements. They are versatile tools that can reach many people who would not otherwise be reached at all.

Both media have available time for sustaining and commercial shows. Sustaining time, which is air time not paid for by sponsors, includes public service time—which is of greatest interest to AEW planning committees.

The amount of public service time available is determined by the station manager, who also determines when and how it is to be used. There are no laws or FCC regulations which require him to use air time for your public service purposes. In order to convince him that your AEW activities are important enough for him to include on sustaining time broadcasts, your AEW committee representative must be knowledgeable about the scheduled events, their purposes, and their relation to the school program and the community at large.

Radio. There are four basic types of AEW radio publicity:

Spot Announcements. There are many varieties of spot announcements—singing commercials, straight announcements, dialogues, dramatizations, and many others. They should be timed as 10-second, 20-second, or 60-second spots, carefully worded, with a strong directive to *do* some specific thing—such as “Visit your schools during American Education Week.” Announcements of varying lengths should be prepared and offered to all local stations.

Don't underestimate the abilities of the students themselves in this area. As a class project, sixth-grade pupils in Rock Island, Ill., wrote public service announcements about American Education Week for the educational radio station. Spot announcements inviting the public to visit their schools were taped by students in Natchez, Miss.



The National Education Association distributes kits of spot announcements and other AEW materials to every radio station in the nation before the observance to allow stations plenty of time to schedule them. AEW publicity committees should notify their local stations well in advance of the observance to alert them of the service and offer to localize the NEA spots—in addition to preparing their own.

News Programs. Send news releases to each radio station's news editor, just as you will be doing for your newspapers' city editors or special AEW contacts. If such releases are made far enough in advance of the specific event being publicized, the radio news editor may want to tape a special interview or on-the-spot report.

You might find it productive to send special releases to featured news broadcasters, who inevitably prefer "exclusives" for their newscasts. If something big breaks suddenly, don't hesitate to telephone the station. Radio stations, even more than newspapers, are concerned with getting news to their listeners while it's still "hot."

Participation in Established Programs. Such participation has the advantage of reaching a ready-made audience. Careful study of the regular programming of a particular station should reveal at least half a dozen opportunities for getting information about American Education Week on the air via established radio shows.

For example, if a regular program invites "guest stars," a school leader, teacher, or student would be an appropriate guest during American Education Week. This holds true for all types of audience-participation programs and meet-the-public shows.

Script writers, producers, and directors will usually lend a hand with many types of programs if they are informed early enough and come to understand the importance of American Education Week.

Special AEW Public Service Programs. This kind of program usually requires extensive effort by both the AEW publicity committee and the radio station staff. Sometimes the station will provide air time only, and it will be up to the AEW publicity committee to plan, organize, and prepare the script for the program. In other cases the station may offer full staff support, with the committee providing background information and talent around which the station staff can weave a script.

The effort involved in getting a special radio show on the air usually pays handsome publicity dividends, but it should not be undertaken unless the AEW committee is ready and able to handle all the details involved.

The program you plan—quiz show, dramatization, demonstration of student skills, panel discussion, speech, interview, or something entirely new—must be based on current items of local interest. For participants, you can draw on the school board, school administrators, teachers, students, the local education association, The American Legion, the PTA, city officials, prominent laymen, or distinguished visitors. But remember, you can't get *any* message across unless people are listening, and people *won't* listen unless they're interested.

Your community, school system, or college may have qualified writers who can prepare original AEW scripts. Working closely with the program director, they may be able to develop shows that not only contribute to education but help build an audience for the station.

Television. Many of the suggestions for preparing AEW publicity for radio also hold true for television. Television has a number of technical considerations which multiply the effort required to produce a top-notch show, but television's combination eye and ear appeal produces an added impact undoubtedly worth the extra effort.

Television can tell the school story better, faster, and more forcefully than has ever before been possible. It can transport a bathrobed-and-slippered citizen without any inconvenience from his living room to the schoolroom to show him the school's facilities, introduce him to its teachers, show him how his children are taught, and describe the school's successes and its problems more dramatically than any of the other mass media.

On-the-Spot Telecasts. Many TV stations are equipped to undertake "remote" telecasts of events taking place away from the studio. However, because of the extremely high costs involved, the event will have to be exceptionally newsworthy for a station even to consider "live" coverage.

On-the-Spot Films. As a substitute for remote telecasts, most stations will film an event for later presentation. If the event is important enough, the station may make a video tape, but more frequently the station will shoot silent footage which will be shown to the accompaniment of narration by an announcer—or an AEW representative.

Still Pictures. The AEW committee should be prepared to provide the TV station with photographs of important AEW events and personalities. "Stills" are particularly useful to stations, which find them easy to use in established program formats and when there is no extensive story to be told. Remember that television uses a 3:4 horizontal proportion; stations will frequently reject photographs

which do not fit this format. Stations will provide their still-photo requirements by phone.

Visuals. The AEW committee might also supply the local TV stations with visuals—maps, drawings, charts, and diagrams—keeping in mind the technicalities of television format and size.

Television Film Spots. The National Education Association sends a 60-second spot announcement concerning American Education Week to every TV station in the country—approximately 600 of them. These can be integrated into longer education programs. NEA Communications Services can help give strength and depth to your local AEW observance by arranging national publicity in newspapers and magazines and on radio and television networks. For information or for rental or loan of NEA films on education, check with your state education association and with libraries in your community. To buy an NEA educational film, consult the *NEA Publications and Audiovisual Materials Catalog* for ordering information.

OTHER AEW PUBLICITY AVENUES

The alert AEW publicity committee can find literally dozens of ways to promote the AEW observance in its community besides through the newspapers, radio, and television.

Surefire attention getters are AEW posters, either national or local, placed in store windows up and down the main street. Many stores will want to tie their own school merchandise into the AEW observance and will gladly use these posters. A variation on this theme was performed using the school buses of Natchez, Miss., which remained parked in shopping malls during school hours bearing signs proclaiming American Education Week and reminding citizens to visit their schools.

Some large stores will make one or more of their show windows available for school exhibits during American Education Week. These window displays can have strong public relations value if you follow these rules:

1. Keep the exhibit simple. Don't clutter it with too many objects or too much to read.
2. Focus attention on a single theme with related details.
3. Use bright but harmonious colors, and if possible use lighting and sound effects.

This high school cheerleading demonstration was sponsored by the Whitehall-Coplay (Pa.) Education Association. Other activities presented at the shopping mall during the week included a junior class play rehearsal, a "meet the candidates" night, a simulated speech class, a German songfest, and an applesauce-making demonstration.

Photo courtesy of *The Morning Call*



4. Put the most significant objects where they can readily be seen.
5. Make signs large and readable—better too large than too small.
6. Use arrows, ribbons, and other devices to lead the eye toward important areas of the exhibit.

Displays are a particularly effective focus for participation in American Education Week by local education associations. The Killingly Education Association (Danielson, Conn.) constructed displays for store windows during American Education Week. The Whitehall-Coplay Education Association (Whitehall, Pa.) set up exhibits on education in the Whitehall Mall and arranged for television coverage of programs and demonstrations at the exhibits, featuring students and teachers from all grade levels.

The display subcommittee can find valuable suggestions in the booklet *Putting Education on Display*, available from NEA Order

Department—American Education Week, The Academic Building, Saw Mill Road, West Haven, Connecticut 06516, for 57 cents each (Stock No. 5061-4-00).

An increasingly popular type of window exhibit is the "living classroom"—a class under glass. By setting up desks in a store window and using microphones to broadcast teacher and student conversations to the sidewalk, regular lessons can be taught while townspeople watch and listen. AEW planners in Miami, Fla., for example, felt that parents were uncomfortable squeezing themselves into the small chairs in elementary classrooms to observe instruction. Some elementary classes, therefore, were held in store windows for a day, while others were put on video tape and shown at downtown banks. The video tape idea was also selected in Hull, Mass., where tapes of school activities were shown in banks. Classes should rotate so that no one group spends too much time "on display" and so that passers-by can get samplings of different subjects and class levels.

Vocal and instrumental music groups performing during noon rush hours are popular with department stores, banks, and other concerns with spacious lobbies and open floor spaces. Choral, small instrumental, pep, and pop groups or stage bands not only call attention to the observance, but give the citizenry a preview of one of many quality programs they can see while visiting community schools.

Another way to attract attention in the downtown area is to hang street banners reminding shoppers to visit their schools during American Education Week. Be sure to get whatever permission may be necessary to hang such banners before going to the trouble and expense of preparing them.

Since enthusiastic community participation in AEW is your goal, a parade is timely. Planning and conducting it is no easy job, however, and whatever you do should be done well. Supervision of the parade would be an appropriate activity for your local American Legion post. They may also furnish several marching units. The McKeesport, Pa., schools decided that a school parade would be a lively kickoff for American Education Week. Two junior high school bands provided the music for a parade of students through the downtown area on the Saturday before the start of American Education Week.

Many civic, service, or fraternal clubs would welcome a speech on education at their October meetings—if it's a *good* one. School administrators in Tucson, Ariz., spoke to nine civic clubs during American Education Week about the progress of and problems in their school district. Well in advance of American Education Week you might organize a speakers bureau, providing a list of teachers, admin-

istrators, and lay friends of education and the interesting topics on which they can talk. Don't overlook the possibility of using capable student speakers. Let the products of good schools speak for themselves. The list can be distributed to various organizations.

Another idea is to organize student teams which can either compete with adult groups in academic quiz sessions or present demonstrations of classroom activity. Local organizations should know about these teams.

Movie theater owners can display AEW posters in their lobbies or put special school messages in their handbills about coming attractions. Sometimes they will include an AEW message in their newspaper advertisements.

Other projects an AEW committee might want to undertake include the following: downtown exhibits of student work; dedications of new schools; athletic contests; musical and dramatic programs; use of AEW flyers in monthly mailings of major business firms and utility companies; receptions for new teachers; homecoming or anniversary programs; educational forums or workshops; invitations to parents and other citizens to eat lunch at school with the students; visits to pupils' homes by teachers; use of AEW place mats and napkins at luncheons, and at selected restaurants during the week; bumper strips on cars, taxis, and buses; fiestas, bazaars, and carnivals; lectures, forums, and discussions; dances, parties, and receptions; and Education-Business Day programs.

Here are some other novel ideas used in observance of American Education Week:

- The Markham Park School in Harvey, Ill., held "Show and Tell" for parents. Parents were invited to sign up for specific times at which they would talk to classes about their vacations, jobs, hobbies, or pets, or show films or slides on topics of interest to the pupils.

- Parents taught classes for one day during American Education Week in Kannapolis, N.C., and probably learned to appreciate the teachers more after the experience.

- High school students in Columbia, S.C., staged a "peaceful takeover" of the school for a day. Students selected by the FTA and the Student Council taught classes, after working with teachers to prepare actual lessons, and staffed administrative offices.

- Wheeling, Ill., citizens got a good idea of how much students learn about local government. Selected after writing essays on why they wished to hold certain city government positions, 14 junior high school students served as honorary public officials for a day.

AN AEW SUCCESS STORY

from Michigan City, Indiana

With American Education Week approaching last fall, I was in a quandary. Frankly, as a UniServ director I was unhappy with the image of the MCEA, the major teachers' association in my area. To many, MCEA stood for grievances and continuous negotiations.

In the past, we had sent teachers letters encouraging creative activities during the annual week. I knew this wasn't enough. We also had had a booth at the local shopping mall where teachers answered the public's questions and passed out literature. This wasn't the answer either.

Past responses indicated these approaches were not drawing the public's attention to the needs of education and the job teachers were doing in school.

Looking back, this was the key to our unique enterprise: accepting the fact that we were not doing the public relations job expected of us.

We had used the print media at times. Once we spent \$400 on an advertisement to present the teachers' story during a particularly difficult stage in negotiation. But this message spoke of conflict. It was negative.

When planning began for the week, I met with the event's chairperson, Sally Standau, an elementary school teacher. We discussed the usual ideas, such as an open house, a speaker's bureau, and the booth we had had before. None really turned us on.

Then I mentioned about the \$400 spent on the ad. Why couldn't we spend a like amount on positive publicity? No formal vote was taken, but we reached a consensus immediately. We arrived spontaneously at the idea of running a supplement in the local newspaper, the *Michigan City News-Dispatch*.

At the time, we didn't realize what was necessary for our idea to be translated into something concrete. We didn't think in terms of producing a first in Indiana. All we knew was that a supplement sounded like a good idea.

We shortly reached agreement on what the supplement should include: pictures of kids and teachers . . . articles on what is happening in school . . . comments by teachers on education.

I anticipated two problems. Collecting the information would not be easy. And the newspaper had to agree to run the supplement. Financing would have to be arranged, but I believed we could sell

enough ads to take care of that. I envisioned a strike force of teachers going door-to-door to local businesses.

Sally and I divided the work load. She assumed responsibility for reminding teachers about submitting articles and pictures. Right at the start Sally sent a flier to teachers requesting this assistance.

Meanwhile, I met with the newspaper advertising director, Dave Druley. We made three decisions: a deadline was set for publication during American Education Week, Druley and I would work out the finances later, and, most importantly, the project was a worthwhile idea.

I say most importantly because the project served as a bridge between what Sally envisioned—telling the public about good things happening in school—and what I sought—promoting a positive image for the MCEA.

Now the project was rolling. Sally and her committee gathered stories and photos. The latter posed no problem because the school system's audiovisual coordinator was loaned to us for this purpose.

Response from teachers was terrific. We ended up with more than 70 articles, half of which saw print. With only one or two exceptions, all were turned in by deadline—a span of less than three weeks.

I hope I'm not making it sound too easy. Sally made dozens of phone calls, urging teachers to contribute. I also phoned teachers whose subject areas were under attack in a time of budget cutbacks. I saw the supplement as a vehicle to publicize these fields, such as counseling and industrial arts.

For the statistically-minded, teachers from 14 of the Michigan City's 22 schools participated. Next time I bet we will have 100 percent.

As the deadline neared, I felt pressure. No decision had been reached on selling ads. I felt uncomfortable, but Druley said not to worry and the problem would work itself out.

I still worried. What would we tell the teachers if no supplement appeared? So Sally went to talk with Druley and newspaper general manager George Averitt.

What happened next was wonderful. On the spot, the newspaper officials committed the newspaper to printing the supplement regardless of whether or not ads were sold. Of course, they expected that ads would sell, but I felt their vote of confidence in the project as a commitment to education.

The countdown had begun. In seven days it would be American Education Week. Sally, her assistant Barb Young, and I sat down with newspaper staffers who volunteered to lay out the supplement.

Originally, we had thought about filling eight tabloid pages. Even after leaving some articles on the cutting room floor, we had enough for twice that much. The job took one afternoon. We filled 15 pages, leaving the sixteenth open for advertisements.

I was proud of what went into that supplement. Articles ranged from baking cookies and studying plants to learning foreign languages and taking field trips. We felt the spectrum was covered. For a first try, we were more than please...

Druley had a staff photographer shoot pictures of us while we arranged the layout. He used these in a slide presentation that he showed to a local supermarket owner, Jim Agemy, three days later.

The price for sponsoring the supplement was nearly \$3,000, yet Agemy accepted it minutes after watching the presentation. I admired him for his decision. What better publicity could a businessman seek than for sponsoring a promotion of what's good in education?

Everybody won. I got the message across that the MCEA did more than file grievances. The *News-Dispatch* not only earned some extra money but also received applause for running our articles. Parents were happy to see pictures of their children and stories about their schools. And Agemy obtained numerous congratulations for his contribution.

Happiest of all, perhaps, was Sally. Page after page of the supplement showed what Sally wanted stressed: the good stories that so often don't make the headlines.

Reaction from teachers was gratifying. It was the first time we had put something into print that didn't result in at least one negative comment. Instead, I heard things like "we need to do more of this kind of thing" and "why haven't we done this before?"

Afterward, I presented the slide show and an explanation of our project to my bosses in the Indiana State Teachers Association. Because they liked what they saw, they had me repeat it for their board of directors. As a result, a committee was appointed to push for similar supplements in newspapers across the state for the next American Education Week.

You could say our idea was successful because people wanted to repeat it, but to me the real story lies in the cooperation among teachers, news media, and business.

You might say it was an educational experience for us all.

—Martin Bell, Director,
Indiana UniServ
District 1-C

CREATE YOUR OWN AEW SUCCESS STORY

You have just read a compilation of AEW ideas that have proved successful through 50 years of observing this special week. Would you like to see your activities used as an illustration in next year's *Observance Manual*? Nothing succeeds like success. First, think of a new wrinkle; plan something a little out of the ordinary. If it's successful, write and tell us about it. Include clippings, descriptions, programs, radio or TV scripts — anything that will help put across the flavor of the event. Indicate whether glossy photographs are available. Your school, school system, or organization may receive an additional PR "plug" by being cited here for its outstanding AEW observance.

NEA Publishing has overall responsibility for coordinating American Education Week for the four national cosponsors. Each year it prepares a wide variety of promotional materials which AEW committees in thousands of communities find extremely helpful. Some of the standard items are the *AEW Source Book* (a collection of quotes and statistics on the current theme to stimulate classroom discussions and to provide material for AEW speeches and articles), filmstrips, bumper strips, illustrated open house invitations, place mats and napkins, lapel tags, parent and student information leaflets, plays, observance guidebooks, and posters. Although these items are developed specifically to assist in the AEW observance, most of them are undated and can be used in public information programs throughout the year. Undated materials are available on a year-round basis.

A listing of these materials, which are sold at a nominal cost to defray production and distribution expenses, is available from the AEW address below.

Address all requests, inquiries, and suggestions to:

NEA Order Department—American Education Week
The Academic Building
Saw Mill Road
West Haven, Connecticut 06516

